

Certainly O'Laughlin's most controversial engagement was her role in 2000's Elian Gonzalez saga. Moved by the little boy whose mother had died while they were fleeing Cuba by raft to the US, she initially acted as a neutral mediator, hosting meetings between the boy's Miami relatives and his Cuban grandmothers in their tug-of-war for custody. Hers was an unpopular position that spawned death threats, bomb threats, and plenty of hate mail.

Then, suddenly, the neutral nun became an ardent advocate for the Miami relatives, urging the government to allow Elian to stay in the US. O'Laughlin says her emotions included fear, compassion, and rejection during a period she describes as one of the most difficult in her life, but insists her faith got her through.

"When I went to bed at night, I had to tell the Lord it was in his hands, and, 'If I offended, I ask pardon. If I haven't, I sure hope you'll help me the next day,'" O'Laughlin reveals. "When I talked to [former Attorney General] Janet Reno about Elian after it was over, she quoted Truman. She said we were both searching for the truth."

Generally, O'Laughlin's disarming manner has been key to her success in helping people, say those who have worked closely with her.

"With the 'honey' here and the 'honey' there, she gets a lot of things accomplished," says Leslie Pantin Jr., chairman of Barry's board of trustees. "She continues to instill in Barry a unique, caring environment while being involved in every major cause we've had in South Florida, from the airport to rebuilding after Hurricane Andrew to the fight against drugs, and of course the Elian Gonzalez position."

O'Laughlin may be loathe to admit it, but one of her toughest fights was her personal battle with lung cancer. She underwent two lung cancer surgeries in the past few years (she never smoked) but has hardly slowed down. After stepping down as Barry's president last summer to allow a new face with a new perspective to take the university to the next level, she continued to focus on education, albeit with a slightly different twist. O'Laughlin's mission now is to teach women how to open universities in developing countries.

"It would be really great if the Lord would let me, before I turn up my toes, play a role in getting schools started and I don't care at what level—because we'll never have peace, we'll never have a legitimate fight against poverty, unless we have education," she says.

In her quasi-retired life, O'Laughlin remains involved in various South Florida organizations, and has faith that the region will become a model that the whole world will envy.

"South Florida has all right ingredients: good people, an embracing climate, and welcoming shores," O'Laughlin says. "My vision and hope is that we continue to open our arms and caress our people and energize them to create a greater state and a greater South Florida by giving their gifts back to this great place."

TRIBUTE TO WILFRED "MICKYE" JOHNSON

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an Iowan who serves as a great

community leader and role model for youth, Wilfred "Mickye" Johnson of Cedar Falls.

A native of eastern Iowa, Mickye has worked with the Classic Upward Bound Program at the University of Northern Iowa since 1988, and has been its director since 1994. Through his work, Mickye has helped countless students attend college and receive high-level academic instruction during their high school years.

In addition to his duties with the Upward Bound program, Mickye has had a number of volunteer roles with various groups, including the Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans, the Iowa Community Health Leadership Institute, the Waterloo Community Development Board, the Iowa Child Support Advisory Committee, and the Methodist Church Administrative Council. Additionally, he has worked to promote business opportunities and community involvement for African-American professionals and leaders in the Cedar Valley community in Iowa.

Mickye's work on behalf of young people extends beyond the classroom. For seven years now he has been a featured speaker for my Youth Summit, which brings together students from all over eastern Iowa to learn about leadership, education, and teamwork. Mickye has served as a motivational speaker at this event, and he always gives a challenging and productive message to the students in attendance. He has often used the humor of a simple lemon as a prop to impress upon his students the importance of life skills and character education to improve their lives.

Mickye received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Northern Iowa, and also holds a Masters of Education Degree. A believer in lifelong learning, he is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Northern Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Mickye Johnson for his good work. His service and leadership in Iowa make him a role model for any believer in education and community service.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE REAUME

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mike Reaume for his dedication and commitment to improving the community of Corona, California. On January 14, 2006, the Corona Chamber of Commerce recognized Mike for serving as the chairman of the board for the chamber during 2005.

After joining the Corona Chamber in 1999, Mike quickly became an active member of various chamber committees. His involvement included work with the Website, Ambassadors, and Corona Night with the Angels Committees. While serving on the chamber's board of directors, Mike was elected as vice president, chairman-elect, and, most recently, chairman of the board. In addition to his dedication to the chamber, Mike owns an insurance brokerage firm, Reaume Insurance Services, which specializes in employee benefits for employers and individuals.

During Mike's term as chairman, the chamber continued to grow in membership and de-

velop new strategies to strengthen the relationships within the business community. The chamber exceeded the goals it set for the year by increasing membership up to nearly 1,150 members representing over 35,000 jobs in the region. Furthermore, the new members made an immediate impact by noticeably increasing the participation levels and attendance at chamber events.

Community-based organizations, like chambers of commerce, rely extensively on committed and dynamic individuals who take the initiative to address important issues facing their community. Mike's dedicated service epitomizes the selfless, hard-working spirit that is the backbone of communities throughout our great nation. The Corona Chamber and the community of Corona are significantly better off thanks to Mike's tireless efforts.

I want to express my appreciation for Mike's tremendous contributions on behalf of our entire community and congratulate him on the tremendous leadership he displayed as chairman of the board.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MAYOR WILLIAM J. COOK

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mayor William "Billy Joe" J. Cook of Camden, Arkansas who died Friday, December 16, 2005 at the age of 80.

A Navy veteran, Mayor Cook attended Arkansas Teachers College in Conway where he obtained a dual degree in business and mathematics. Working for ten years as a salesman for Burroughs Business Machines in Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and El Dorado, Mayor Cook decided to go into business with his father as a distributor of Texaco products in Camden.

No stranger to public service and remembered for his utmost integrity, Mayor Cook served on the Camden City Council for 7 years and as mayor of Camden for 2 years. In his free time, Mayor Cook enjoyed spending time outdoors tending to his garden and raising Tennessee Walking horses.

My heartfelt condolences go out to Mayor Cook's wife, Helen Lynch Cook; his daughter, Cindy Cook Tittle; and his sister, Weegie Watts. While Mayor Cook may no longer be with us, his legacy and his spirit will always live on in all the lives he touched.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF SANJNA VIJAYA PANDIT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Rahul and Lavannya Pandit of Houston, Texas, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Sanjna Vijaya Pandit was born on January 12, 2006, at 2:20 a.m., weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Sanjna has been born into a loving home, where she will

be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE WEEKS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor George Weeks, who is retiring as a political columnist from The Detroit News, where he has written for over 20 years. George has been the premiere political columnist for Michigan for over two decades.

George Weeks was born in 1932 in Traverse City, MI. A graduate of Traverse City High School in 1950, Weeks stayed close to home, earning his undergraduate degree in journalism from Michigan State University just 4 years later.

George Weeks spent the first 15 years of his journalism career at United Press International, working as a Lansing staff correspondent and later Bureau chief, Detroit Bureau radio and news editor, diplomatic correspondent, and Washington foreign editor. He also entered public service as press secretary, special counsel, and executive secretary for Michigan Governor William G. Milliken, who later remarked of Weeks's character and credibility as the chief reason Weeks was able to seamlessly move from journalism to public service and back.

In 1981, Weeks resumed his studies as a Kennedy Fellow at the prestigious Harvard University Institute of Politics. However, Weeks's love for on-the-record journalism brought him back to print as a political columnist for the Detroit News in 1983, where he remained until his retirement. During that time he freelanced many articles and has written several books on Michigan. Weeks was honored for his 40 years as journalist, historian, and public servant with a well-deserved place in the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame in 1996.

Mr. Speaker, for over 20 years, George Weeks brought a keen eye, a sharp wit and a unique perspective to Michigan and national politics. His work will be greatly missed by the people of Michigan.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF GEORGE WEEKS

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to my dear friend, George Weeks, on the occasion of his retirement from the Detroit News after 22 years of distinguished service.

A long-time Michigan resident, George graduated from Traverse City High School in 1950. He then earned a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University in 1954. In 1981, George returned to the academic world at the Harvard University Institute of Politics as a Kennedy Fellow.

George began his journalism career at United Press International in 1954. During his

15 years there his duties included Lansing staff correspondent, Detroit Bureau radio and news editor, Lansing Bureau Chief, diplomatic correspondent and Washington foreign editor. In 1969 George began his career in the staff of Governor William G. Milliken as press secretary and later became Milliken's chief of staff. After 14 years in public service, George resumed his journalism career, becoming a political columnist for The Detroit News.

Over the span of his career, George has covered the White House, State Department and Pentagon, was a panelist on "Meet the Press," and was a member of the White House Correspondents Association, the State Department Correspondents Association and Overseas Writers. He is also a recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award of MSU's College of Communications Arts and an inductee into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame. A noted author, George has published "Stewards of the State: The Governors of Michigan," "Sleeping Bear: Its Lore, Legends and First People," "Sleeping Bear: Yesterday and Today," and co-authored "Michigan: Visions of Our Past."

His many accomplishments serve as a lasting example of excellence in journalism. Michigan has been well-served by George Weeks, his insight and knowledge of Michigan politics will be deeply missed.

I would like to thank George for his dedicated service both to the Detroit News and the Michigan community. As he enters his retirement years, I would ask that my colleagues join with Deborah and I to wish him and his wife, Mollie, a very happy, healthy and relaxing future.

TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE WEEKS

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. George Weeks, a long-time political journalist for the Detroit News, who is set to retire from writing his weekly column. Mr. Weeks has had a long and illustrious career as a journalist—evidenced by his induction into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame in 1996. However, his accolades and accomplishments are by no means limited to the field of journalism.

Mr. Weeks not only reported political news, but helped make some of it himself. He served as press secretary and chief of staff for Governor William G. Milliken for 14 years. Mr. Weeks used the expertise he gained in Governor Milliken's office to earn the position of a Kennedy Fellow at Harvard University.

Mr. Weeks, a native of Traverse City, MI, is a true Michigander—an expert, not only in Michigan politics, but in Michigan culture and history as well. I would like to extend my thanks to him for all of his good work and wish him well in his retirement. The Wolverine State is better off for the contributions of George Weeks.

HONORING GEORGE WEEKS ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JOHN J.H. "JOE" SCHWARZ

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor George Weeks as he retires as a columnist for The Detroit News.

George Weeks has seen it all. No one knows more about the issues that are important to Michigan than him. He's been around politics and government longer than most people I know, and as such, like few others, he can be counted on to provide insight and perspective on the news of the day. He not only tells readers what the news is, but he tells them what it means.

George began his journalism career with United Press International, covering the White House, Foggy Bottom and Capitol Hill. He rose to the post UPI's top foreign editor. After his work in Washington, George exchanged the U.S. Capitol for the State Capitol upon becoming UPI's Lansing bureau chief. Recognizing his talent, he was soon tapped by Gov. William Milliken to serve as his press secretary and rounded out his service to the administration as the governor's chief of staff.

Since that time, George has ably served The Detroit News as its political columnist. George's passion for Michigan, the Great Lakes and the environment in general is evident in every column he writes. A workhorse and not a showboat, George effectively brings attention to the most important issue facing our Nation, without making the story about himself. He has always conducted himself with the utmost dignity and integrity and it has been a pleasure to work with him.

With great pleasure I join my colleagues in honoring George Weeks, a great journalist.

HONORING DETROIT NEWS COLUMNIST GEORGE WEEKS UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Detroit News columnist George Weeks upon his retirement.

George Weeks, who with the support of his wife, Mollie, covered Michigan politics for the Detroit News since 1984 with depth, integrity and fairness. George Weeks is a rare professional who during his career was able to seamlessly transition from reporting on politics to serving in government to returning to his original craft.

After initially serving his country in the U.S. Army, George Weeks launched his career in journalism by working for United Press International in Lansing and Detroit. He would later become UPI's diplomatic correspondent and Washington foreign editor, positions that took him to regions spanning the globe.

He began his service in government as the press secretary to Michigan Governor William G. Milliken in 1969, and later rose to become the governor's executive secretary. In 1984, he returned to the fourth estate when he became a columnist for the Detroit News with a